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Child Protection Reporting Policy

MACC is committed to providing a child safe environment where children's safety and wellbeing is supported and children feel respected, valued and encouraged to reach their full potential. Our Service embeds the *Victorian Child Safe Standards* and promotes a culture of safety and wellbeing to minimise the risk of child abuse or harm to children whilst promoting children's sense of security and belonging.

We will ensure all employees and volunteers understand the meaning, importance and benefits of providing a child safe environment and critically understand their obligations and requirements as Mandatory Reporters. At all times, management, staff and volunteers will treat children with the utmost respect and understanding.

PURPOSE

All educators, staff and volunteers are committed to identifying possible risk and significant risk of harm to children and young people at MACC. We comprehend our duty of care responsibilities to protect children from all types of abuse and neglect and will adhere to our moral and legislative obligations at all times.

We aim to implement effective strategies to assist in ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all children. Our Service will act in the best interest of each child, assisting them to develop to their full potential in a secure and child safe environment. We understand our statutory duty of care to comply with both the Victorian Child Safe Standards and Reportable Conduct Scheme to build our capacity as an organisation to prevent and respond to allegations of child abuse.

SCOPE

This policy applies to management, the approved provider, nominated supervisor, students, staff, families, visitors (including contractors) and children of the Service.



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WHAT IS CHILD ABUSE?

Child abuse is any action towards a child or young person that harms or puts at risk their physical, psychological or emotional health or development. Child abuse can be a single incident or can be a number of different incidents that take place over time.

IDENTIFYING SIGNS OF CHILD ABUSE

Staff within early childhood services play a vital role in protecting children from harm by responding to and reporting any incidents, disclosure or suspicions. Educators and staff are best placed to identify signs and behaviours that may indicate that a child has been subject to abuse or identify a community member, staff member, contractor or volunteer may be a perpetrator. Understanding the signs of child abuse is critical in supporting children's safety and wellbeing.

There are different forms of child abuse-

- Physical abuse
- child sexual abuse
- grooming
- emotional child abuse
- neglect
- family violence and
- children exhibiting inappropriate sexual behaviour. Further information about the recognition of signs of child abuse and definitions included in the Appendix



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Duty of Care

Duty of care refers to your responsibility to adequately protect children in care from harm. This common law concept applies to all staff members within any Victorian early childhood service and is usually expressed as “a duty to take reasonable steps to protect children from injury that is reasonably foreseeable.” Victoria State Government (2021).

Duty of care means:

- acting on concerns quickly and in the child's best interests
- protecting the safety, health and wellbeing of children in their care
- seeking appropriate advice or consulting when unsure
- reporting concerns to the relevant authorities
- providing ongoing support to a child and their family
- sharing information, upon request, to assist DFFH Child Protection or Police to protect and/or promote the wellbeing and development of a child
- attending Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) Child Protection Case Planning meetings.
- Staff may breach their duty of care towards a child if they fail to act in the way a reasonable/diligent person would in the same situation.

Mandatory reporting is the legislative requirement for selected classes of people to make a report to Child Protection and/or Victoria Police where they form a reasonable belief, that a child has been or is at risk of significant harm, as a result of physical or sexual abuse, and the child's parents have not protected or are unlikely to protect the child from that abuse. It is a criminal offence to fail to report in these circumstances. In Victoria (VIC) mandatory reporting is regulated by the *Children Youth and Families Act 2005*.

Mandatory reporters

Mandatory reporters in Victoria, are people who deliver the following services, wholly or partly, to children as part of their paid or professional work:

- registered medical practitioners
- nurses, including midwives
- Victorian police officers



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- registered teachers and school principals
- out of home care workers (excluding voluntary foster and kinship carers)
- early childhood workers
- youth justice workers
- registered psychologists
- school counsellors
- people in religious ministry.

Working With Children Check

A Working With Children Check is mandatory for all employees working or volunteering with children within Education and Care Services. Education and Care Services and organisations are required to check the status of an employee's Working With Children Check BEFORE an employee begins working with children. Working with Children Check Victoria will notify organisations in writing if an employee's Working With Children Check has been suspended or revoked.

Child Safe Standards

Our Service is committed to keeping children and young people safe and are compliant with the 11 Victorian Child Safe Standards and principles and Reportable Conduct Scheme. (See: *Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy*).

Our Service has policies and practices in place that include robust screening of all educators and staff members prior to employment, supervision, training and other human resources practices to reduce the risk of child abuse for new and existing staff members, processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse, strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse and strategies to promote the participation and empowerment of children.

Failure to disclose and failure to protect

Failure to disclose or take action in relation to suspected child sexual abuse can constitute a criminal offence. The law requires any adult who holds a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed in Victoria, by an adult against a child (aged under 16) disclosed this information to police.



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Forming a reasonable belief/reasonable grounds

A person forms a reasonable belief that a child is in need of protection, or their safety or wellbeing is at risk when they are more likely to accept rather than reject their suspicion and the belief is formed through disclosures, observations or other information. Proof is not required to support your claim.

Reasonable grounds for forming a belief may include where:

- a child states they have been abused
- a child states they know someone who has been, or is being, abused
- someone who knows the child states that the child has been abused, is being abused, or is at risk of abuse
- you observe a child's behaviour, actions or injuries that may place them at risk of harm or abuse
- you are aware of persistence violence, parental substance misuse, disability that is impacting on the child's safety, stability or development
- you observe signs or indicators of abuse.

Staff should make sufficient enquiries to form a belief, however it is not the role of staff to conduct an investigation into child protection concerns or criminal offences. DHHS, DFFH Child Protection or Victoria Police will determine what is to be investigated.

IMPLEMENTATION

Our Service strongly opposes any type of abuse against a child and endorses high quality practices in relation to protecting children. Educators have an important role to support children and young people and to identify concerns that may jeopardise their safety, welfare, or wellbeing. To ensure best practice, all educators will attend approved Child Protection training certified by a registered training organisation. Educators will continue to maintain current knowledge of child protection and Mandatory Reporter requirements by completing Child Protection Awareness Training **annually**.



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The Approved Provider/ Nominated Supervisor will ensure:

- any Responsible Person in day-to-day charge of the Service has successfully completed a course in child protection approved by the Regulatory Authority
- the recruitment process for all educators and staff is robust and includes pre-employment screening, reference checks
- all educators', staff, and volunteers' Working with Children Checks are checked prior to engagement of work and recorded on staff records
- all employees and volunteers are:
 - provided with a copy of the current *Child Protection, Child Safe Environment, Child Safety and Wellbeing, Code of Conduct and Reportable Conduct Scheme Policies* as part of the induction process at the Service
 - aware of child protection legislation including:
 - their mandatory reporting obligations and responsibilities if they have formed a reasonable belief that a child has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm
 - their duty of care obligations for all children who are involved in or affected by the suspected child abuse
 - their mandatory reporting obligations and responsibilities if they have formed a reasonable belief that a child has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm
 - aware of indicators showing a child may be at risk of harm or significant risk of harm
 - aware of the [Four Critical Actions](#) to follow when responding to incidents, disclosures and suspicions of child abuse
- training and development are provided for all educators, staff, and volunteers in child protection on an annual basis
- training and information are provided to all educators about the Child Information Sharing, Family Violence Reforms and Family Violence Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Management Framework (MARAM).
- educators are supported and empowered to make a report to DFFH, Child Protection, Victoria Police or seek a referral to Child FIRST by having clear procedures in place
- access is provided to all staff regarding relevant legislations, regulations, standards and other resources to help educators, staff, and volunteers meet their obligations



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- to adhere to the Reportable Conduct Scheme and report any allegations of 'reportable conduct'
- to notify the Commission within three (3) business days of becoming aware of a reportable allegation made against an employee or volunteer using online forms found at <https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/reportable-conduct-scheme/about-reporting-allegations/>
- records of abuse or suspected abuse are kept in line with our *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy*
- an incident, injury, trauma and illness record is kept (as per National Law and the Children's Services Act)
- to notify the regulatory authority through the NQA-ITS (within 7 days) of any incident where it is reasonably believed that physical and/or sexual abuse of a child has occurred or is occurring while the child is being educated and cared for by the Service
- to notify the regulatory authority through the NQA-ITS (within 7 days) of any allegation that sexual or physical abuse of a child has occurred or is occurring while the child is being educated and cared for by the Service.

Educators will:

- promote the welfare, safety, and wellbeing of children at the Service at all times
- ensure children feel safe and supported at the early childhood service and their individual needs are met
- comprehend their obligations as mandatory reporters and their duty of care requirements if they have formed a reasonable belief that a child has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm
- participate in annual child protection training and other relevant professional training
- participate in training about the Child Information Sharing, Family Violence Reforms and Family Violence Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Management Framework (MARAM)
- be able to identify signs of child abuse
- follow the [Four Critical Actions for Early Childhood Services: Responding to incidents, disclosures and suspicions of Child Abuse](#)
 - Responding to an emergency
 - Reporting to authorities
 - Contacting parents or carers
 - Providing ongoing support



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- respect what a child discloses, taking it seriously and follow up on their concerns through the appropriate channels
- refer families to appropriate agencies where concerns of harm do not meet the threshold of significant harm. These services may be located through Child FIRST or The Orange Door-<https://services.dffh.vic.gov.au/referral-and-support-teams>
Family consent will be sought before making referrals
- allow children to be part of decision-making processes where appropriate
- prepare accurate records recording exactly what happened, conversations that took place and what was observed to pass on to the relevant authorities to assist with any investigation
- understand that allegations of abuse or suspected abuse against them are treated in the same way as allegations of abuse against other people
- NOT investigate suspicion of abuse or neglect but collect only enough information to substantiate concerns and pass on to the Child Protection Helpline or appropriate authority
- understand their legal obligations to report or take action in relation to suspected child abuse under the Reportable Conduct Scheme
- share information with other professionals working with children as part of the information sharing and family violence reform schemes
- provide ongoing monitoring and follow-up for children's health and wellbeing.

MAKING A CHILD PROTECTION REPORT

Early childhood services must take immediate action relating to concerns about potential child abuse.

In the case of an emergency, staff should contact Emergency Services on 000.

Under the Failure to Disclose offence, *any adult* must report to Victoria Police if they reasonably believe that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child under the age of 16.



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A report must be made to DFFH Child Protection if the mandatory reporter forms a belief on reasonable grounds the child is:

- in need of protection due to child abuse
- at risk of being, harmed (or has been harmed) and the harm has, or is likely to have an impact on the child's safety, stability or development.

If an educator has a concern and they are unsure if a report should be made to DFFH Child Protection or Victoria Police, or a referral to ChildFIRST they should discuss this with the approved provider, nominated supervisor or responsible person.

Services will contact their local DFFH Child Protection intake provider to report concerns.

Northern Division intake: 1300 664 977

South Division Intake: 1300 655 795

East Division intake: 1300 360 391

West Division intake- metropolitan: 1300 664 977

West Division intake- rural and regional: 1800 075 599

If you are not sure which number to call, check Department of Families, Fairness and Housing-[Child protection](#) contacts for details on the LGAs covered by each intake service.



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REPORTING CONCERNS ABOUT THE WELLBEING OF A CHILD

Educators and staff who have significant concerns for the wellbeing of a child (or unborn child) may report these concerns to DFFH Child Protection or refer the matter to ChildFIRST.

DOCUMENTING A SUSPICION OF HARM/ YOUR ACTIONS

If educators have concerns about the safety of a child, they will:

- record their concerns in a non-judgmental and accurate manner as soon as possible
It is recommended that ECEC services use '[Responding to Suspected Child Abuse: Template for all Victorian Early Childhood Services](#)']
- record their own observations as well as precise details of any discussion with a parent (who may for example explain a noticeable mark on a child).
 - not endeavour to conduct their own investigation
- Child Protection will require accurate information including:
 - child's personal details (name, gender, address, DOB, details of siblings)
 - indicators of harm- the reason for believing that the injury or behaviour is the result of abuse or neglect
 - description- full details of the alleged abuse (times and dates)
 - safety assessment- assessment of any immediate danger to the child or children
 - other services- agency involved (previous)
 - family information- language spoken, history of violence
 - cultural characteristics- any specific cultural details that will assist to care for the child
 - notifier information- name, date, position, relationship to child
 - date of report and signature

DOCUMENTING A DISCLOSURE

A disclosure of harm emerges when someone, including a child, tells you about harm that has happened or is likely to happen. When a child discloses that he or she has been abused, it is an opportunity for an adult to provide immediate support and



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comfort and to assist in protecting the child from the abuse. It is also a chance to help the child connect to professional services that can keep them safe, provide support and facilitate their recovery from trauma. Disclosure is about seeking support and your response can have a great impact on the child or young person's ability to seek further help and recover from the trauma.

Please refer to 'Responding to an Incident, Disclosure or Suspicion of Child Abuse' template

When receiving a disclosure of harm, the educator will:

- remain calm and not display expressions of panic or shock
- state clearly that the abuse is not the child's fault
- listen to the child
- not promise to keep a secret
- use the child's language and vocabulary
- tell the child/person they have done the right thing in revealing the information but that they'll need to tell someone who can help keep the child safe and stop the abuse
- only ask enough questions to confirm the need to report the matter because probing questions could cause distress, confusion and interfere with any later enquiries
- not attempt to conduct their own investigation or mediate an outcome between the parties involved.
- document as soon as possible so the details are accurately captured including:
 - time, date and place of the disclosure
 - 'word for word' what happened and what was said, including anything they (the staff member/educator) said and any actions that have been taken
 - date of report and signature.

In addition, an educator receiving a disclosure from a child will:

- give the child or young person their full attention
- maintain a calm appearance
- reassure the child or young person it is right to tell



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- accept the child or young person will disclose only what is comfortable and recognise the bravery/strength of the child for talking about something that is difficult
- let the child or young person take his or her time
- let the child or young person use his or her own words
- not make promises that can't be kept. For example, never promise that you will not tell anyone else
- honestly tell the child or young person what you plan to do next
- not confront the perpetrator.

CONFIDENTIALITY

It is important that any notification to DFFH Child Protection or Child FIRST remains confidential, as it is vitally important to remember that no confirmation of any allegation can be made until the matter is investigated. The individual who makes the notification should not inform the suspected perpetrator (if known). This ensures the matter can be investigated without contamination of evidence or pre-rehearsed statements. It also minimises the risk of retaliation on the child for disclosing.

Protection for reporters

All reporters are protected against retribution for making or proposing to make a report under amendments to the *Children Youth and Families Act 2005 and Crimes Act 1958* effective April 2021. The identity of the reporter is protected by law from being disclosed, except in certain exceptional circumstances. Provided the report is made in good faith:

- does not breach standards of professional conduct or ethics
- cannot lead to defamation and civil and criminal liability

A report is also an exempt document under the *Freedom of Information Act 1989*.

Child Information Sharing Scheme (CISS) and Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme (FVISS) and the Family Violence Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management Framework (MARAM).



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Our Service will align with the MARAM Framework to assist in identifying, assessing and responding to family violence risk. This includes ensuring our educators and staff:

- have a shared understanding of and consistent response to family violence
- work collaboratively to provide coordinated and effective risk assessment and management responses to identify family violence
- share information relevant to family violence risk with other services
- promote continuous improvement in risk assessment and management practice, information sharing and enhanced collaboration with other services.

The [Child Information Sharing Scheme](#) (CISS) allows professionals working with children (from birth to 18 years of age) to gain a complete view of the children they work with, making it easier to identify wellbeing or safety needs earlier, and to act on them sooner. Victorian education and care services can share, request and use information about child wellbeing or safety through the scheme with other professionals provided certain requirements for sharing are met.

Educators within the Service need to have sufficient information in order to be able to support a child who has been impacted (or is suspected to have been impacted) by child abuse. Therefore, it is legally allowable for educators to share certain information about a child with other staff members of the Service without the consent of a parent/carer and without breaching privacy laws. Data security requirements that apply to the Service must be followed when sharing any information.

Under CISS, information sharing entities (ISEs) can share confidential information with other ISEs for the purpose of promoting the wellbeing or safety of a child or group of children or sharing information to inform action.

Sharing of information may assist the ISE to

- access and engage with supportive services
- access resources for learning and development
- make a decision, assessment or plan
- start or conduct an investigation
- provide a service relating to a child/children
- manage any risk to a child/children.



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Under the Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme (FVISS) relevant information can be shared for 2 purposes:

- Family violence assessment purpose-to establish or assess the risk of a person committing family violence or being the subject of family violence
- Family violence protection purpose- manage the risk to the victim survivor. This includes information sharing to support ongoing risk assessment.

Risk Assessment Entities (RAEs) can request and receive information for a family violence assessment. RAEs include DFFH Child Protection, Victoria Police, family violence services and some Orange Door services. Our Service will respond to all requests for information in a timely manner. The approved provider or licensee should maintain contact with Victoria Police and DFFH Child Protection as necessary to protect the safety and wellbeing of the children involved. Disclosure of information to an RAE does not constitute unprofessional conduct or a breach of professional ethics.

BREACH OF CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

All educators and staff working with children have a duty of care to support and protect children. A duty of care is breached if a person:

- does something that a reasonable person in that person's position would not do in a particular situation
- fails to do something that a reasonable person in that person's position would do in the circumstances or
- acts or fails to act in a way that causes harm to someone the person owes a duty of care.

MANAGING A BREACH IN CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Management will investigate the breaches in a fair, unbiased and supportive manner by:

- discussing the breach with all people concerned and advising all parties of the process
- giving the educator/staff member the opportunity to provide their version of events
- documenting the details of the breach, including the versions of all parties
- recording the outcome clearly and without bias



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- ensuring the matters in relation to the breach are kept confidential
- reach a decision based on discussion and consideration of all evidence.

OUTCOME OF A BREACH IN CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Depending on the nature of the breach outcomes may include:

- emphasising the relevant element of the child protection policy and procedure
- providing closer supervision
- further education and training
- providing mediation between those involved in the incident (where appropriate)
- disciplinary procedures if required
- reviewing current policies and procedures and developing new policies and procedures if necessary

REPORTABLE CONDUCT SCHEME-ALLEGATIONS AGAINST EMPLOYEES, VOLUNTEERS or STUDENTS (or contractors)

The reportable Conduct Scheme has been designed to ensure that the Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP) will be aware of every allegation of certain types of employee misconduct involving children in relevant organisations, including approved education and care services (kindergartens, after school hours care services) and Children's services (occasional care providers).

For more information, please refer to the Reportable Conduct Scheme



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EDUCATING CHILDREN ABOUT PROTECTIVE BEHAVIOUR

Our program will educate children:

- about acceptable and unacceptable behaviour, and what is appropriate and inappropriate contact at an age-appropriate level and understanding
- about their right to feel safe at all times
- to say 'no' to anything that makes them feel unsafe or uncomfortable
- about how to use their own knowledge and understanding to feel safe
- to identify feelings that they do not feel safe
- the difference between 'good' and 'bad' secrets
- that there is no secret or story that cannot be shared with someone they trust
- that educators are available for them if they have any concerns
- to tell educators of any suspicious activities or people
- to recognise and express their feelings verbally and non-verbally
- that they can choose to change the way they are feeling.

RESOURCES FOR INDICATORS OF ABUSE OR NEGLECT

NAPCAN- <https://www.napcan.org.au/napcan-brochures/>

Child Safe Organisations- <https://childsafe.humanrights.gov.au>

Commission for Children and Young People. (2021). [Victoria's new Child Safe Standards](#)

Victoria State Government Education and Training. Child protection in early childhood (PROTECT)

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/professionals/health/childprotection/Pages/ecidentifying.aspx>

Victoria State Government. (2021). Family Violence Information Sharing and Child Information Sharing Reforms <https://www.justice.vic.gov.au/information-sharing>

Victorian Government. Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management Framework (MARAM) practice guides and resources. <https://www.vic.gov.au/maram-practice-guides-and-resources>



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RELATED LEGISLATION

<i>Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)</i>
<i>Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Amended 2014) (Vic)</i>
<i>Commission for Children and Young People Act 2012 (Amended 2014) (Vic)</i>
<i>Failure to Disclose 2014 (Under Section 327 of the Crimes Act 1958 [Vic])</i>
<i>Failure to Protect 2015 (Under Section 327 of the Crimes Act 1958 [Vic])</i>
<i>Family Violence Protection Act 2008 (Vic.)</i>
<i>The Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic)</i>
<i>Working with Children Act 2005 (Vic)</i>
<i>Family Law Act 1975 (Cth)</i>
<i>Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)</i>

RELATED POLICIES

Child Safe Environment Policy Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy Code of Conduct Policy Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy Interactions with Children, Family and Staff Policy Privacy and Confidentiality Policy Recruitment Policy Reportable Conduct Scheme Policy [Vic.]	
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Appendix 1: Identify signs of child abuse

The State Government of Victoria identifies the following signs of child abuse and includes definitions and physical and behaviour indicators. The following information has been sourced from the Victoria State Government- Child Protection in Early Childhood (PROTECT).

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/professionals/health/childprotection/Pages/ecidentifying.aspx>

INDICATORS OF ABUSE

There are common physical and behavioural signs that may indicate abuse or neglect. The presence of one of these signs does not necessarily mean abuse or neglect. Behavioural or physical signs which assist in recognising harm to children are known as indicators. The following is a guide only. One indicator on its own may not imply abuse or neglect. However, a single indicator can be as important as the presence of several indicators. Each indicator needs to be deliberated in the perspective of other indicators and the child's circumstances. A child's behaviour is likely to be affected if he/she is under stress. There can be many causes of stress and it is important to find out specifically what is causing the stress. Abuse and neglect can be single incidents or ongoing and may be intentional or unintentional.

General indicators of abuse and neglect may include:

- Marked delay between injury and seeking medical assistance
- History of injury
- The child gives some indication that the injury did not occur as stated
- The child tells you someone has hurt him/her
- The child tells you about someone he/she knows who has been hurt
- Someone (relative, friend, acquaintance, and sibling) tells you that the child may have been abused.

PHYSICAL ABUSE

Physical child abuse is the non-accidental infliction of physical injury or harm of a child.

Examples of physical abuse may include beating, shaking or burning, assault with implementation of female genital mutilation.



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What are the physical indicators of physical child abuse?

Physical indicators of physical child abuse include (but are not limited to):

- evidence of physical injury that would not likely be the result of an accident
- bruises or welts on facial areas and other areas of the body (back, bottom, legs, arms and inner thighs)
- burns from boiling water, oil or flames or burns that show the shape of the object used to make them (iron, grill, cigarette)
- fractures of the skull, jaw, nose and limbs, especially those not consistent with the explanation offered, or the type of injury possible at the child's age of development
- cuts and grazes to the mouth, lips, gums, eye area, ears and external genitalia
- bald patches where hair has been pulled out
- multiple injuries, old and new
- effects of poisoning
- internal injuries

What are the physical indicators of physical child abuse?

In an infant or toddler:

- self-stimulatory behaviours, for example, rocking, head banging
- crying excessively or not at all
- listless and immobile and/or emaciated and pale
- exhibits significant delays in gross motor development and coordination
- their parent/carer is unresponsive or impatient to child's cues and unreceptive to support.

In all children, infants and toddlers:

- disclosure of physical abuse (by child, friend, family member)
- inconsistent or unlikely explanation for cause of injury
- wearing clothes unsuitable for weather conditions to hide injuries
- wariness or fear of a parent, carer or guardian and reluctant to go home
- unusual fear of physical contact with adults
- fear of home, specific places or particular adults
- unusually nervous, hyperactive, aggressive, disruptive and destructive to self-and/or others
- overly compliant, shy, withdrawn, passive and uncommunicative



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- change in sleeping patterns, fear of the dark or nightmares and regressive behaviour (bed-wetting)
- no reaction or little emotion displayed when being hurt or threatened
- habitual absences from the service without reasonable explanation, where regular attendance is expected
- complaining of headaches, stomach pains or nausea without physiological basis, poor self-care or personal hygiene.

CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

Child sexual abuse is when a person uses power or authority over a child to involve them in sexual activity. This can include a wide range of physical and non-contact sexual activity.

Physical sexual contact:

- kissing or fondling a child in a sexual way
- masturbation
- fondling the child's genitals
- oral sex
- vaginal or anal penetration by a penis, finger or other object
- exposure of the child to pornography

Non-contact offences

- talking to a child in a sexually explicit way
- sending sexual messages or emails to a child
- exposing a sexual body part to a child
- forcing a child to watch a sexual act including showing pornography to a child
- having a child pose or perform in a sexual manner (including child sexual exploitation)
- grooming or manipulation

Child sexual abuse does not always involve force. In some circumstances a child may be manipulated into believing that they have brought the abuse on themselves, or that the abuse is an expression of love through a process of grooming.



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What is child sexual exploitation?

Child sexual exploitation is also a form of sexual abuse where offenders use their power (physical, financial or emotional) over a child to sexually or emotionally abuse them. It often involves situations and relationships where young people receive something (food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, gifts, money) in return for participating in sexual activities.

Child sexual exploitation can occur in person or online, and sometimes the child may not even realise they are a victim.

Who is most at risk of child sexual abuse?

Any child can be victim of sexual abuse, however children who are vulnerable, isolated and/or have a disability are disproportionately abused and are much more likely to become a victim.

What are the physical indicators of child sexual abuse?

Physical indicators of sexual abuse may include (but are not limited to):

- injury to the genital or rectal area (bruising, bleeding, discharge, inflammation or infection)
- injury to areas of the body such as breasts, buttocks or upper thighs
- discomfort in urinating or defecating
- presence of foreign bodies in the vagina and /or rectum
- sexually transmitted infections
- frequent urinary tract infections.

What are the behavioural indicators of child sexual abuse?

The behavioural indicators of sexual abuse may be, but are not limited to in an infant or toddler

- self-stimulator behaviours, for example rocking, head banging
- crying excessively or not at all
- listless and immobile and/or emancipated and pale
- exhibits significant delays in gross motor development and coordination



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In all children, infants and toddlers:

- disclosure of sexual abuse (by child, friend, family member)
- drawings or descriptions of stories that are sexually explicit and not age appropriate
- persistent and age-inappropriate sexual activity (excessive masturbation or rubbing genitals against adults)
- wariness or fear of a parent, carer or guardian and reluctance to go home
- unusual fear of physical conduct with adults
- change in sleeping patterns, fear of the dark or nightmares and regressive behaviour such as bed-wetting
- wearing clothes unsuitable for weather conditions to hide injuries
- unusually nervous, hyperactive, aggressive, disruptive and destructive to self-and/or others
- exhibits significant delays in gross and fine motor development and coordination
- overly compliant, shy, withdrawn, passive and uncommunicative
- fear of home, specific places or particular adults
- poor self-care or personal hygiene
- complaining of headaches, stomach pains or nausea without physiological basis.

GROOMING

Grooming is when a person engages in predatory conduct to prepare a child for sexual activity at a later time. Grooming can include communicating and/or attempting to befriend or establish a relationship or other emotional connection with the child or their parent/carer. Sometimes it is hard to see when someone is being groomed until after they have been sexually abused, because some grooming can look like 'normal' caring behaviour.

Examples of grooming behaviours may include:

- giving gifts or special attention to a child or their parent or carer
- controlling a child through threats, force or use of authority (this can make a child or their parent fearful to report unwanted behaviour)
- making close physical contact or sexual contact, such as inappropriate tickling and wrestling



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- openly or pretending to accidentally expose the victim to nudity, sexual material and sexual acts.

What are the behavioural indicators of child grooming?

Behavioural indicators that a child may be subject to grooming include (but are not limited to):

- developing an unusually close connection with an older person
- displaying mood changes (hyperactive, secretive, hostile, aggressive, impatient, resentful, anxious, withdrawn, depressed)
- using street/different language, copying the way the new friend may speak, talking about the new friend who does not belong to his/her normal social circle
- possessing gifts, money and expensive items given by the friend

EMOTIONAL ABUSE

Emotional child abuse occurs when a child is repeatedly rejected, isolated or frightened by threats or by witnessing family violence. It also includes hostility, derogatory name-calling and put-downs, and persistent coldness from a person, to the extent that the child suffers or is likely to suffer, emotionally or psychological harm to their physical or developmental health. Emotional abuse may occur with or without other forms of abuse.

What are the physical indicators of emotional child abuse?

Physical indicators of emotional abuse include (but are not limited to)

- language delay, stuttering or selectively being mute
- delays in emotional, mental or physical development

What are the behavioural indicators of emotional child abuse?

In an infant or toddler

- self-stimulatory behaviours, for example, rocking, head banging
- crying excessively or not at all
- listless and immobile and/or emancipated and pale



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- exhibits significant delays in gross motor development and coordination
- their parent/carer is unresponsive or impatient to child's cues and unreceptive to support

In all children, infants and toddlers

- overly compliant, passive and undemanding behaviour
- extremely demanding, aggressive and attention-seeking behaviour or anti-social and destructive behaviour
- low tolerance or frustration
- poor self-image and low self-esteem
- unexplained mood swings, depression, self-harm
- behaviours that are not age-appropriate
- exhibits significant delays in gross and fine motor development and coordination
- poor social and interpersonal skills
- violent drawings or writing
- lack of positive social contact with other children.

NEGLECT

Neglect includes a failure to provide the child with

- an adequate standard of nutrition
- medical care
- clothing
- shelter
- supervision

to the extent that the health or physical development of the child is significantly impaired or placed at serious risk.

In some circumstances the neglect of a child:

- can place the child's immediate safety and development at serious risk
- may not immediately compromise the safety of the child but is likely to result in longer term cumulative harm.

This includes low-to-moderate concerns for the wellbeing of a child, such as:



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- concerns due to conflict within a family
- parenting difficulties
- isolation of a family or a lack of apparent support

Both forms of neglect must be responded to via the Four Critical Actions for Early Childhood Services.

What are the physical indicators of neglect?

Physical indicators of neglect include (but are not limited to):

- appearing consistently dirty and unwashed
- being consistently inappropriately dressed for weather conditions
- being at risk of injury or harm due to consistent lack of adequate supervision from parents
- being consistently hungry, tired and listless
- having unattended health problems and lack of routine medical care
- having inadequate shelter and unsafe or unsanitary conditions.

What are the behavioural indicators of neglect?

Behaviour indicators of neglect include (but are not limited to):

In an infant or toddler:

- self-stimulatory behaviours, for example, rocking, head banging
- crying excessively or not at all
- listless and immobile and/or emancipated and pale
- exhibits significant delays in gross motor development and coordination
- inadequate attention to the safety of the home (e.g. dangerous medicines left where children may have access to them)
- being left unsupervised, either at home, on the street or in a car
- their parent/carer is unresponsive or impatient to child's cues and unreceptive to support
- developmental delay due to lack of stimulation.



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In all children, infants and toddlers:

- being left with older children or persons who could not reasonably be expected to provide adequate care and protection
- gorging when food is available or inability to eat when extremely hungry
- begging for, or stealing food
- appearing withdrawn, listless, pale and weak
- aggressive behaviour, irritability
- little positive interaction with parent, carer or guardian
- indiscriminate acts of affection and excessive friendliness towards strangers
- exhibits significant delays in gross and fine motor development and coordination
- poor, irregular or non-attendance at the service (where regular attendance is expected)
- refusal or reluctance to go home
- self-destructive behaviour
- taking on an adult role of caring for parent.

FAMILY VIOLENCE

Family violence is behaviour towards a family member that may include:

- physical violence or threats of violence
- verbal abuse, including threats
- emotional or psychological abuse
- sexual abuse
- financial and social abuse.

A child's exposure to family violence constitutes child abuse. This exposure can be very harmful and may result in physical harm and long-term physical, psychological and emotional trauma. Action must be taken to protect the child, and to mitigate or limit their trauma.

Research shows that during pregnancy and when families have very young babies:

- there is an increased risk of family violence
- pre-existing family violence may increase in severity
- there is an opportunity for intervention as families are more likely to have contact with services.



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The longer that a child experiences or is exposed to family violence, the more harmful it is. This is why if you suspect that a child is exposed to, or at risk of being exposed to family violence, you must follow the [four critical actions](#).

Family Violence in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities

In identifying family violence in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities it is important to recognise that:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family violence may relate to relationships that aren't captured by the Western nuclear family model (grandparents, uncles and aunts, cousins and other community and culturally defined relationships)
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family violence can also include cultural and spiritual abuse
- perpetrators of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family violence may not be Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family violence occurs in a historical context of colonisation, dispossession, and the loss of culture. This has resulted in the breakdown of kinship systems and of traditional law, racism, and previous government policies of forced removal of children from families.

However, this should never detract from the legitimacy of the survivor's experience of violence, or your obligation to report and respond to any suspected family violence.

What are the physical indicators of family violence?

Physical indicators of family violence may include (but are not limited to):

- speech disorders
- delays in physical development
- failure to thrive (without an organic cause)
- bruises, cuts or welts on facial areas, and other parts of the body including back, bottom, legs, arms and inner thighs
- any bruises or welts (old or new) in unusual configurations, or those that look like the object used to make the injury (such as fingerprints, handprints, buckles, iron or teeth)



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- internal injuries.

What are the behavioural indicators of family violence?

Behavioural indicators of family violence may include (but are not limited to):

In an infant or toddler:

- self-stimulatory behaviours, for example, rocking, head banging
- crying excessively or not at all
- listless and immobile and/or emancipated and pale
- exhibits significant delays in gross motor development and coordination.

In all children, infants and toddlers:

- violent/aggressive behaviour and language
- depression and anxiety
- appearing nervous and withdrawn, including wariness of adults
- difficulty adjusting to change
- developmentally inappropriate bedwetting and sleeping disorders
- extremely demanding, attention-seeking behaviour
- participating in dangerous risk-taking behaviours to impress peers.
- overly compliant, shy, withdrawn, passive and uncommunicative behaviour
- 'acting out', such as cruelty to animals.
- demonstrated fear of parents, carers or guardians, and of going home
- complaining of headaches, stomach pains or nausea without physiological basis.

CHILDREN EXHIBITING INAPPROPRIATE SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR

Inappropriate sexual behaviour includes:

Problem sexual behaviour

Problem sexual behaviour is the term used by the Victorian government and funded service providers to describe concerning sexual behaviour exhibited by children under the age of 10 years. Children under 10 years are deemed unable to consent to any form of sexual activity and cannot be held criminally responsible for their behaviour.



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Sexually abusive behaviour

Sexually abusive behaviour is the term used by the Victorian Government and funded service providers to describe concerning sexual behaviour by children aged 10 years or older and under 15 years of age.

A child is considered to exhibit sexually abusive behaviour when they have used power, authority, or status to engage another party in sexual activity that is unwanted, or the other party is unable to give consent. A child who engages in sexually abusive behaviour may be in need of therapeutic treatment. It may also be an indicator that the child has been or is being sexually abused by others. Sexually abusive behaviour may amount to a sexual offence. A sexual offence includes rape, sexual assault, indecent acts and other unwanted sexualised touching, all of which are offences under the Crimes Act 1958.

It may be difficult to determine the nature of children's sexual behaviour, including whether the behaviour:

- constitutes a sexual offence
- is indicative of any underlying abuse.

Under Victorian Law:

- children aged between 12-15 can only consent to sexual activity with a peer no more than two years their senior (therefore sexual contact led by a child with another child outside of these age parameters may amount to a sexual offence)
- in order for a person to consent to sexual activity they have to have the capacity to understand the context and possible consequences of the act (therefore sexual contact led by a child involving a person with a cognitive impairment or affected by alcohol and other drugs may also amount to a sexual offence).



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Most critically you must follow the four critical actions if:

- you witness an incident, receive a disclosure or form a reasonable suspicion that a child has engaged in inappropriate sexual behaviour, even if you're not sure (these actions will support you to report to Victoria Police)
- a child's inappropriate sexual behaviour leads you to form a reasonable belief that the child may be subject to abuse.

Reviewed: April, 2023

Next review: April, 2025



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6 Moresby Avenue *phone:* 9850 7755 *email:* office@moresbychildcare.org.au
Bulleen VIC 3105 *web:* moresbychildcare.org



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Attachment 1: Mandatory Reporting Flow Chart

Reporting Process

Who can Report?	Child	Parent	Staff	Visitors
What to Report?	<p>Any child safety concerns, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Disclosure of abuse or harm - Allegation, suspicion, or observation - Breach of Code of Conduct <p style="text-align: center;">Listen without judgment or fear, use open questions, show empathy</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Do Not Problem Solve</p>			
	<p>Call 000 if a child is in immediate danger</p>			
Who?	<p>Child Protection (suspected abuse) – 1300 664 977</p> <p>Child First (Wellbeing concerns) – 1300 775 160</p> <p>Victoria Police (in immediate danger/ safety is compromised) - 000</p>			
How?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Face to Face conversation - Phone - Email: emr.qar@edumail.vic.gov.au 			
What happens next?	<p>The contact person will offer pastoral support to the child, the parents, the person who reports and the respondent</p> <p>The contact person will support the matter being reported to the relevant authorities and manage process, making a report as soon as possible if required</p>			
Follow-up	<p>The contact person may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Suggest ongoing support of those affected - Support the ongoing investigation by the relevant authorities - Providing feedback - Making recommendation regarding preventive measures 			



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CHILD SAFE STANDARDS CHECKLIST/AUDIT

THE NEW CHILD SAFE STANDARDS CHECKLIST

STANDARD 1 - Organisations establish a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children and young people are respected and valued

- 1.1 A child's ability to express their culture and enjoy their cultural rights is encouraged and actively supported
- 1.2 Strategies are embedded within the organisation which equip all members to acknowledge and appreciate the strengths of Aboriginal culture and understand its importance to the wellbeing and safety of Aboriginal children and young people
- 1.3 Measures are adopted by the organisation to ensure racism within the organisation is identified, confronted and not tolerated. Any instances of racism are addressed with appropriate consequences
- 1.4 The organisation actively supports and facilitates participation and inclusion within it by Aboriginal children, young people and their families
- 1.5 All of the organisation's policies, procedures, systems and processes together create a culturally safe and inclusive environment and meet the needs of Aboriginal children, young people and their families

CHILD SAFETY ACTIONS	POLICIES/ PROCEDURES/ RESOURCES	COMPLIANT	ACTION REQUIRED
FOUNDATION STEPS			



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1.1 1.4 1.5 5.4	Has the Service developed a Commitment to Child Safety and Wellbeing Statement (including a commitment to the cultural safety of Aboriginal Children)	Commitment to Child Safety and Wellbeing Statement	YES NO	
1.1 1.2 1.3 1.4 1.5	Does the <i>Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy</i> describe the Service's commitment to respecting and valuing Aboriginal children, including; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - staff/volunteers encouraging and supporting children to express their culture and enjoy their cultural rights - staff/volunteers supporting and facilitating participation and inclusion by Aboriginal children and families - zero tolerance towards racism and how the Service will respond and address instances of racism 	Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy	YES NO	
1.1 1.3	Do the Code of Conduct and Job descriptions outline zero tolerance to racism and state that children will be supported to express their culture and enjoy their cultural rights	Code of Conduct Job descriptions	YES NO	
1.3	Are instances of racism identified and addressed	Performance Management Plans (as required) Code of Conduct Policy	YES NO	



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1.2	Does the Child Safety and Wellbeing Action Plan identify steps taken that staff/volunteer are supported to understand, respect and value Aboriginal culture and to understand the importance of this to the wellbeing and safety of Aboriginal children	Child Safety and Wellbeing Action Plan	YES NO	
1.4	Has the Child Safety and Wellbeing Action Plan identified and recorded steps taken that supports and facilitates participation and inclusion of Aboriginal children and families	Child Safety and Wellbeing Action Plan	YES NO	
1.2	Does the Child Safety and Wellbeing Action Plan identify steps taken that recognise and celebrate Aboriginal peoples, their achievements, communities and cultures	Child Safety and Wellbeing Action Plan	YES NO	
1.3	Does the Child Safety and Wellbeing Action Plan identify steps taken that ensure racism within the Service is identified and appropriately addressed	Child Safety and Wellbeing Action Plan	YES NO	
1.5	Does the Child Safety and Wellbeing Action Plan identify steps taken that create a culturally safe environment for Aboriginal children within the Service	Child Safety and Wellbeing Action Plan	YES NO	
1.1 1.2 1.3 1.4 1.5	Has the Child Safety and Wellbeing Action Plan outlined steps to establish a culturally safe environment including identifying steps already taken and gaps identified including who is responsible for taking action and timeframe for action	Child Safety and Wellbeing Action Plan	YES NO	
FURTHER STEPS				



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1.5	Does the <i>Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy</i> describe expectations and provide guidance about actions staff/volunteers must take to establish a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children are respected and valued	Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy	YES NO	
1.2	Does the Service create an inclusive and welcoming physical and online environment for Aboriginal children and their families by acknowledging and respecting Aboriginal peoples, communities, cultures and values	Practices Observed Commitment to Child Safety and Wellbeing Statement	YES NO	
1.1 1.4 3.1	Do children receive information about cultural rights and the Service take active steps to encourage Aboriginal children to express their culture	Practices Observed	YES NO	
1.4 3.6	Is the Service taking steps to empower children and provide them with opportunities to participate in a way that is culturally safe for Aboriginal children	Practices Observed Commitment to Child Safety and Wellbeing Statement Educational Program	YES NO	
1.4	Does the Service provide culturally safe opportunities for Aboriginal families to participate in the Service	Family Handbook Practices Observed Newsletter	YES NO	



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<p>1.1 1.2</p>	<p>Are members of the Service provided with – information on cultural rights, the strengths of Aboriginal cultures and the importance of culture to the wellbeing and safety of Aboriginal children – information on the connection between cultural safety and the prevention of child abuse and harm for Aboriginal children – opportunities to learn and express appreciation of Aboriginal cultures and histories</p>	<p>Practices Observed Family Handbook Staff Handbook Educational Program Multicultural Policy</p>	<p>YES NO</p>	
<p>1.2</p>	<p>Are strategies that encourage the Service’s community to acknowledge and appreciate the strengths of Aboriginal cultures are developed, implemented and embedded into the Service</p>	<p>Service Philosophy Multicultural Policy Commitment to Child Safety and Wellbeing Statement</p>	<p>YES NO</p>	
<p>1.3</p>	<p>Are strategies to prevent racism implemented and incidents of racism are not tolerated</p>	<p>Commitment to Child Safety and Wellbeing Statement Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy Code of Conduct Policy Performance Management Plans (if required)</p>	<p>YES NO</p>	



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STANDARD 2 - Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture

- 2.1 The organisation makes a public commitment to child safety
- 2.2 A child safe culture is championed and modelled at all levels of the organisation from the top down and bottom up
- 2.3 Governance arrangements facilitate implementation of the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy at all levels
- 2.4 A Code of Conduct provides guidelines for staff and volunteers on expected behavioural standards and responsibilities
- 2.5 Risk management strategies focus on preventing, identifying and mitigating risks to children and young people
- 2.6 Staff and volunteers understand their obligations on information sharing and record keeping

CHILD SAFETY ACTIONS		POLICIES/ PROCEDURES/ RESOURCES	COMPLIANT	ACTION REQUIRED
2.1	Is a public commitment to child safety is available and displayed for public access	Commitment to Child Safety and Wellbeing Statement	YES NO	
2.3	Does the <i>Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy</i> set out the Services expectations and practices in relation to each of the Standards	Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy	YES NO	
2.4	Has a Code of Conduct been developed that set out expectations regarding behaviour of staff and volunteers with children and in promoting and maintaining child safety and wellbeing	Code of Conduct Staff Handbook Student/Volunteer Handbook	YES NO	



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2.2	Does Management, staff and volunteers champion and model a child safe culture. Do they express support for keeping children safe, take action when they have concerns about children's safety and prioritise the safety of children as part of everyday practice	Child Protection Policy Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy	YES NO	
2.3	Does Management set clear expectations around child safety and ensure the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy is implemented by staff and volunteers	Staff Handbook Student/ Volunteer Handbook Job Descriptions	YES NO	
2.2 2.3	Do leaders promote a culture of reporting	Child Protection Policy Child Safe Environment Policy		
2.5 9.1 9.3	Governance arrangements mean management supervise whether risk assessment and management in the Service is properly focused on identifying, preventing and reducing risks of child abuse and harm	Governance Policy Child Protection Policy Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy	YES NO	
2.6	Do staff and volunteers understand their information sharing and record keeping obligations	Child Protection Policy Information Sharing and Family Violence Reforms Policy	YES NO	
2.4	Is the Code of Conduct is communicated to all staff and volunteers and do leaders hold them to account to comply with it	Code of Conduct Policy Induction Checklist Probation, Induction, and Orientation Policy	YES NO	



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STANDARD 3 - Children and young people are empowered about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously

- 3.1 Children and young people are informed about all of their rights, including to safety, information and participation
- 3.2 The importance of friendships is recognised and support from peers is encouraged, to help children and young people feel safe and be less isolated
- 3.3 Where relevant to the setting or context, children and young people are offered access to sexual abuse prevention programs and to relevant related information in an age-appropriate way
- 3.4 Staff and volunteers are attuned to signs of harm and facilitate child-friendly ways for children and young people to express their views, participate in decision-making and raise their concerns
- 3.5 Organisations have strategies in place to develop a culture that facilitates participation and is responsive to the input of children and young people
- 3.6 Organisations provide opportunities for children and young people to participate and are responsive to their contributions, thereby strengthening confidence and engagement

CHILD SAFETY ACTIONS		POLICIES/ PROCEDURES/ RESOURCES	COMPLIANT	ACTION REQUIRED
3.1	Are age-appropriate and easy to understand documents, in print or online, easily accessible and support children to; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – understand their rights, including to safety, information and participation – know how adults in the Service should behave – understand the Service’s complaints process and how to raise safety concerns for themselves, their friends or peers 	Child Protection Policy	YES NO	



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3.1 3.4 3.5 3.6	Do the Service's policies and procedures; – promote children's empowerment and participation – embed support for the rights of children	Respect for Children Policy Educational Program Policy Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy	YES NO	
3.1 3.4	Do staff and volunteers in the Service engage with children to help them to; – understand their rights, including to safety, information and participation – know how adults in the Service should behave – understand the Service's complaints process and how to raise safety concerns for themselves, their friends or peers – know about support services aimed at children	Interaction with Children Policy Dealing with Complaints Policy Child Protection Policy Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy Child Safe Environment Policy	YES NO	
3.5 3.6	Are practices in the Service that disempower children identified and action is taken to change them	Educational Program reflections	YES NO	
3.4	Are staff and volunteers provided with information to help them understand, recognise and act on signs of child abuse or harm	Child Protection Policy Training and professional development regarding Child Protection	YES NO	
3.3	Where relevant, does the Service provide access to sexual abuse prevention programs and other relevant information to children in an age-appropriate and accessible manner	Child Protection Educational Program	YES NO	
3.5 3.6	Does the Service create opportunities for children to express their views and participate in decisions that impact them? What is heard and learnt from children influences how the Service works	Educational Program Practices Observed	YES NO	



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3.4	Are staff and volunteers supported to develop knowledge and skills to help children participate, express their views and raise their concerns	Practices Observed Interactions with Children Policy	YES NO	
3.2	Does the Service support children to develop social connections and friendships with their peers, build skills in children to support their peers and challenge bullying or isolating behaviour between children	Behaviour Guidance – Bullying Policy	YES NO	



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STANDARD 4 - Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing

- 4.1 Families participate in decisions affecting their child
- 4.2 The organisation engages and openly communicates with families and the community about its child safe approach and relevant information is accessible
- 4.3 Families and communities have a say in the development and review of the organisation's policies and practices
- 4.4 Families, carers and the community are informed about the organisation's operations and governance

CHILD SAFETY ACTIONS		POLICIES/ PROCEDURES/ RESOURCES	COMPLIANT	ACTION REQUIRED
4.3	Do the Service's policies reflect the importance of family and community involvement and describe ways this involvement can occur	Family Communication Policy Governance Policy Family Handbook	YES NO	
4.2 7.2	Do complaint handling policies include procedures for keeping families informed and provide guidance on how to do this while complying with obligations regarding confidentiality and privacy	Dealing with Complaints Policy and Procedure Family Handbook Privacy and Confidentiality Policy	YES NO	
4.4	Does the Service support families and communities to take an active role in promoting and maintaining child safety and wellbeing by communicating about their role in child safety and wellbeing within the Service	Family Handbook Newsletter	YES NO	



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4.2 4.4	<p>Is the Service open and transparent with families and communities by;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – providing accessible information about the Service’s child safety and wellbeing policies and practices – providing information about the Service’s governance and operations, how complaints are handled and how the Service manages disciplinary actions and child safety risks 	<p>Family Handbook Policies and Procedures folder Newsletter Notice regarding how complaints can be made</p>	YES NO	
4.1	<p>Do families have an opportunity to participate in decisions made by the Service that impact the safety and wellbeing of their child. Communication with families support the full diversity of families to participate</p>	<p>Family Meetings Family Surveys</p>	YES NO	
4.3	<p>Are opportunities are created for families and community members to provide feedback on the Service’s policies, procedures and practices including the Service’s approach to child safety and wellbeing</p>	<p>Policy Review Form Family surveys</p>	YES NO	
4.3 7.3	<p>Does the Service take the feedback and involvement of families and communities seriously and takes their views into account</p>	<p>Family Surveys Practices Observed Newsletter evidence</p>	YES NO	



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STANDARD 5 - Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice

- 5.1 The organisation, including staff and volunteers, understands children and young people’s diverse circumstances, and provides support and responds to those who are vulnerable
- 5.2 Children and young people have access to information, support and complaints processes in ways that are culturally safe, accessible and easy to understand
- 5.3 The organisation pays particular attention to the needs of children and young people with disability, children and young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, those who are unable to live at home, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex children and young people
- 5.4 The organisation pays particular attention to the needs of Aboriginal children and young people and provides/promotes a culturally safe environment for them

CHILD SAFETY ACTIONS		POLICIES/ PROCEDURES/ RESOURCES	COMPLIANT	ACTION REQUIRED
5.2	Are materials available for children, including information about complaints processes and supports, are accessible, age-appropriate and available in a range of languages and formats as needed. Written documents alone are not relied on, particularly for children who are blind or vision impaired, or children who cannot read	Practices Observed	YES NO	



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<p>5.1 5.2 5.3 5.4</p>	<p>Does the <i>Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy</i> describe;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the Service’s commitment to equity and inclusion – how the Service will recognise and respect the diverse needs of all children – how the Service provides avenues for children or their families to identify their individual needs – how the Service will provide children with access to information, support and complaints processes in ways that are culturally safe, accessible and easy to understand – how the Service will support equity and make reasonable changes to support participation by all children and respond to all children’s needs – how the Service upholds equity for all children and prevents child abuse and harm resulting from discrimination based on disability, race, ethnicity, religion, sex, intersex status, gender identity or sexual orientation 	<p>Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy</p>	<p>YES NO</p>	
<p>5.1 5.3</p>	<p>Does the Service take steps to understand the diverse circumstances and needs of children who engage, or may engage, with it</p>	<p>Enrolment form All about me form Orientation program for children</p>	<p>YES NO</p>	



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<p>5.1 5.3 5.4</p>	<p>Are staff and volunteers;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – provided with information and guidance about children’s diverse circumstances, how to identify factors that can increase a child’s vulnerability to harm, and how to promote equity and safety for all children – encouraged to take action to support and respond to children who are experiencing vulnerability, including making inquiries and responding where there are signs of increased vulnerability – encouraged to take action to uphold equity for all children, promote children’s safety and prevent child abuse and harm 	<p>All About Me form Professional Development Child Protection educational program Child Protection Policy</p>	<p>YES NO</p>	
<p>5.1 2.2</p>	<p>Does management set clear expectations around achieving equity and respect for diversity</p>	<p>Anti-Bias Policy Gender Equity Policy Respect for Children Policy</p>	<p>YES NO</p>	
<p>5.1</p>	<p>Does the Service ensure all children are reasonably supported to participate</p>	<p>Educational Program Policy Additional Needs Policy</p>	<p>YES NO</p>	



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STANDARD 6 - People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice

6.1 Recruitment, including advertising, referee checks and staff and volunteer pre-employment screening, emphasise child safety and wellbeing

6.2 Relevant staff and volunteers have current working with children checks or equivalent background checks

6.3 All staff and volunteers receive an appropriate induction and are aware of their responsibilities to children and young people, including record keeping, information sharing and reporting obligations

6.4 Ongoing supervision and people management is focused on child safety and wellbeing

CHILD SAFETY ACTIONS		POLICIES/ PROCEDURES/ RESOURCES	COMPLIANT	ACTION REQUIRED
6.1	Do employment advertising include the Service's commitment to child safety and wellbeing	Recruitment Policy	YES NO	
6.1	Have position descriptions set clear expectations about the role's requirements, duties and responsibilities regarding child safety and wellbeing	Position Descriptions Recruitment Policy	YES NO	



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<p>6.1 6.2 6.3 6.4</p>	<p>Do organisational recruitment, human resources and volunteering policies describe;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – recruitment practices that support the Service to appoint people who are suitable to work with children – pre-employment screening practices including interviewing, referee checks, Working with Children Check and other registration or background checking – requirements for an induction about the Service’s child safety practices – how supervision and people management practices will support ongoing assessment of a person’s suitability to work with children 	<p>Recruitment Policy Staff Handbook Staffing Arrangements Policy Probation, Induction and Orientation Policy</p>	<p>YES NO</p>	
<p>6.1 8.1</p>	<p>Do induction documents for staff and volunteers include;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the Code of Conduct – the <i>Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy</i> – information about the Service’s child safety practices and complaints processes as well as reporting, record keeping and information sharing obligations. 	<p>Code of Conduct Policy Student and Volunteer Policy Probation, Induction and Orientation Policy New Employee Induction Checklist Information Sharing and Family Violence Reforms Policy</p>	<p>YES NO</p>	



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6.1	<p>Are the child safety and wellbeing requirements of each role assessed before recruitment of new staff and volunteers? These include;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - qualifications, experience and attributes required - duties and responsibilities with children - measures required to manage any child abuse or harm risks including screening, training and supervision requirements 	Job Descriptions Recruitment Policy	YES NO	
6.1	<p>Is information and guidance provided to recruiting staff on how to prioritise child safety in the recruitment process, including how to identify and manage any child safety concerns raised through the application, interview and screening process</p>	Recruitment Policy Staff Handbook	YES NO	
6.1	<p>Do recruitment processes include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a range of values-based interview questions to establish suitability to work with children - pre-employment screening practices including referee checks, Working with Children Check and other registration or background checking - verification that required qualifications, registrations and Working with Children Check are valid and up-to-date - keeping records of the recruitment process 	Recruitment Policy	YES NO	
6.4	<p>Does supervision and people management include regular reviews to check whether staff are following Codes of Conduct and other child safe policies</p>	Performance Management Policy	YES NO	



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6.4	Is guidance provided for managers on steps to take when managing staff or volunteers whose behaviour raises child safety concerns	Performance Management Policy Reportable Conduct Scheme Policy	YES NO	
6.2	Are qualifications, Working with Children Check and other registration or ongoing screening checks are regularly reviewed for changes and that they are still valid. Is action taken to manage the risks to children when a person's qualifications, Working with Children Check or other registration or ongoing screening check are no longer valid	Staffing Arrangements Policy	YES NO	
6.3	Do staff and volunteers receive an induction adjusted to each role's requirements, duties, risks and responsibilities in relation to child safety and wellbeing. Does the induction cover the Service's child safety practices and complaints process as well as reporting, record keeping and information sharing obligations	Probation, Induction and Orientation Policy Student and Volunteer Policy New Employee Induction Checklist Information Sharing and Family Violence Reforms Policy	YES NO	



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STANDARD 7 - Processes for complaints and concerns are child-focused

- 7.1 The organisation has an accessible, child-focused complaint handling policy which clearly outlines the roles and responsibilities of leadership, staff and volunteers, approaches to dealing with different types of complaints, breaches of relevant policies or the Code of Conduct and obligations to act and report
- 7.2 Effective complaint handling processes are understood by children and young people, families, staff and volunteers, and are culturally safe
- 7.3 Complaints are taken seriously and responded to promptly and thoroughly
- 7.4 The organisation has policies and procedures in place that address reporting of complaints and concerns to relevant authorities, whether or not the law requires reporting, and co-operates with law enforcement
- 7.5 Reporting, privacy and employment law obligations are met

CHILD SAFETY ACTIONS	POLICIES/ PROCEDURES/ RESOURCES	COMPLIANT	ACTION REQUIRED
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<p>2.6 7.1 7.2 7.3 7.4 7.5 S.9</p>	<p>Is the complaint handling policy easy to understand, culturally safe, accessible and child-focused? Does the complaint handling policy;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – includes information on how adults and children can make a complaint and how the Service will respond to and investigate complaints in a prompt and thorough way – creates a complaints process that is accessible to the full diversity of children, staff, volunteers, families and communities – covers alleged abuse and harm of children by adults and by other children – covers breaches of the Service’s Code of Conduct – sets out what support and assistance will be provided for those making a complaint – outlines how risks to children will be managed when a complaint is raised and an investigation is underway – covers record keeping obligations – supports privacy and employment law obligations to be met 	<p>Dealing with Complaints Policy and Procedure Code of Conduct Policy Privacy and Confidentiality Policy Complaints / Grievance Form</p>	<p>YES NO</p>	
<p>7.1 7.2</p>	<p>Do documents, in print or online, describe the complaints process for staff, volunteers, children, families and communities</p>	<p>Family Handbook Newsletters Notices for families Complaint/Grievance Procedure</p>	<p>YES NO</p>	



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7.5	Do policies and procedures include information about when complaints should be reported to authorities, including Victoria Police, Child Protection and the Commission for Children and Young People	Reportable Conduct Scheme Policy Dealing with Complaints Policy	YES NO	
7.1	Do disciplinary policies support the Service to take action when a complaint is raised	Performance Management Policy Code of Conduct Policy	YES NO	
7.2 7.4	Does the Service make information about how to make a complaint available and accessible to everyone involved with the Service	Dealing with Complaints Policy Newsletter Notice regarding how to make a complaint Family Handbook Staff Handbook	YES NO	
7.1 7.3 7.4	Does the Service provide staff and volunteers with support and information on what and how to report, including to authorities outside the Service	Child Protection Policy Reportable Conduct Scheme Policy	YES NO	



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7.1 7.3 7.4 7.5 S.9	<p>Are complaints are taken seriously, meaning the Service consistently;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – identifies and manages any risks to children – responds to complaints promptly and thoroughly – prioritises the safety of children and also meets privacy and employment law obligations – supports everyone involved in the complaints process – reports complaints of alleged abuse or harm of children and concerns about child safety to the authorities and cooperates with law enforcement 	<p>Dealing with Complaints Policy and Procedure Complaints / Grievance Management Form Child Protection Policy and Procedure</p>	YES NO	
7.3 2.6	<p>Are records kept regarding complaints made to the Service, including concerns raised about the safety of children and disclosures about alleged abuse or harm of children, and actions taken to respond</p>	<p>Record Keeping and Retention Policy Child Protection Policy and Procedure</p>	YES NO	
7.2 4.3	<p>Are children, families and communities are consulted when designing and reviewing complaint handling policies and procedures</p>	<p>Writing, Reviewing and Maintaining Policies Policy Dealing with Complaints Policy</p>	YES NO	
7.1 10.1	<p>Does the Service review complaint handling policies and procedures at regular intervals</p>	<p>Writing, Reviewing and Maintaining Policies Policy Dealing with Complaints Policy</p>	YES NO	



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STANDARD 8 - Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training

- 8.1 Staff and volunteers are trained and supported to effectively implement the organisation’s Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- 8.2 Staff and volunteers receive training and information to recognise indicators of child harm including harm caused by other children and young people
- 8.3 Staff and volunteers receive training and information to respond effectively to issues of child safety and wellbeing and support colleagues who disclose harm
- 8.4 Staff and volunteers receive training and information on how to build culturally safe environments for children and young people

CHILD SAFETY ACTIONS		POLICIES/ PROCEDURES/ RESOURCES	COMPLIANT	ACTION REQUIRED
8.1 8.2 8.3 8.4	Has a training action plan been completed for staff and volunteers that includes training on; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the <i>Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy</i> – the <i>Information Sharing and Family Violence Reforms Policy</i> – identifying indicators of child abuse and harm – how to support a person making a disclosure about harm to a child – how to respond to issues of child safety including internal and external reporting requirements, notifying families and carers and managing risks to children – how to support cultural safety 	Information Sharing and Family Violence Reforms Policy Professional Development Policy Professional Development Procedure Professional Development Plan	YES NO	



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8.2 8.3 8.4	<p>Have guidance materials (such as policies, procedures, guidelines, information sheets and posters) for staff and volunteers been provided regarding;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – identifying indicators of child abuse and harm, including where caused by other children – how to respond to issues of child safety including internal and external reporting requirements, notifying families and carers and managing risks to children – how to support a person disclosing harm to a child – how to create culturally safe environments in the Service 	<p>Team meeting notes Child Protection Policy Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy Reportable Conduct Scheme Policy Information Sharing and Family Violence Reforms Policy Staff Handbook Student and Volunteer Handbook</p>	YES NO	
8.1 8.2 8.3 8.4	<p>Has a training register recorded completion of training by staff and volunteers</p>	<p>Professional Development Record</p>	YES NO	
8.1 8.2 8.3 8.4	<p>Does management communicate to staff and volunteers that child safety training is mandatory</p>	<p>Staff Handbook Job Descriptions Professional Development Policy</p>	YES NO	
8.1	<p>Is training provided to staff and volunteers on the <i>Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy</i> on induction and at regular intervals</p>	<p>Team meeting notes Probation, Induction and Orientation Policy Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy</p>	YES NO	



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8.2 8.3 8.4	<p>Is training provided to staff and volunteers that supports their ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - identify signs of child abuse and harm - respond to issues of child safety including internal and external reporting requirements, notifying families and carers and managing risks to children - support a person disclosing child harm - create culturally safe environments in the Service 	<p>Professional Development Policy Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy Child Safe Environment Policy Information Sharing and Family Violence Reforms Policy</p>	YES NO	
8.1 8.2 8.3 8.4	<p>Training and guidance on child safety is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - appropriate to the Service's engagement with children and the needs of children in the Service - trauma-informed - offered on a regular basis to enable staff and volunteers to keep their skills and knowledge up-to-date - regularly reviewed and updated to remain effective 	Professional Development Policy	YES NO	
8.1 8.2 8.3 8.4	<p>Do supervision and management of staff and volunteers include identifying child safety training needs</p>	Performance Management Policy	YES NO	



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STANDARD 9 - Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed

- 9.1 Staff and volunteers identify and mitigate risks in the online and physical environments without compromising a child’s right to privacy, access to information, social connections and learning opportunities
- 9.2 The online environment is used in accordance with the organisation’s Code of Conduct and Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and practices
- 9.3 Risk management plans consider risks posed by organisational setting, activities and the physical environment
- 9.4 Organisations that contract facilities and services from third parties have procurement policies that ensure the safety of children and young people

CHILD SAFETY ACTIONS		POLICIES/ PROCEDURES/ RESOURCES	COMPLIANT	ACTION REQUIRED
9.1 9.3	Does the risk assessment identify risks of child abuse and harm in both physical and online environments connected with the Service	Risk Assessment of environment	YES NO	
9.3	Do risk management plans list the actions the Service will take to prevent or reduce each identified risk of child abuse and harm	Child Protection Policy Information Sharing and Family Violence Reforms Policy	YES NO	
9.2 9.3	Does the Code of Conduct and <i>Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy</i> identify how the Service will keep children safe physical and online environments, physical and online environments, with specific reference to higher-risk activities	Code of Conduct Policy Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy Cyber Safety Policy Child Safe Environment Policy Physical Environment Policy	YES NO	



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9.4	Do procurement policies about engaging third-party contractors set out processes to protect children from risks of child abuse and harm, such as requiring compliance with the Service's Code of Conduct and <i>Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy</i>	EC Intervention Practitioner Management Policy Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy	YES NO	
9.1 9.3	Are risk assessment and management plans informed by and responsive to the views and concerns of staff, volunteers and children. Do plans show that the Service has balanced the need to manage the risk of harm and abuse against children's rights to privacy, access to information, social connections and learning opportunities	Child Protection Policy Risk Assessments	YES NO	
9.1	Are staff and volunteers provided with risk management plans so they are aware of risks of child abuse and harm and know what action they need to take to prevent and reduce them	Child Protection Policy	YES NO	
9.1	Is action is taken by staff and volunteers in the Service to prevent and reduce risks of child abuse and harm when identified	Child Protection Policy and Procedure	YES NO	
9.1 9.2	Are risk assessments and management plans are regularly reviewed to keep them up-to-date and include lessons from complaints, concerns and safety incidents	Risk Assessments	YES NO	
2.5	Do the Service's leadership and governance arrangements ensure risk assessment and management are focused on identifying, preventing and reducing risks of child abuse and harm	Child Protection Policy Information Sharing and Family Violence Reforms Policy	YES NO	



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9.4	When negotiating contracts with third parties, do contracts include terms that allow the Service to take action if the third party does not meet expected child safety and wellbeing standards	Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy Child Safe Environment Policy	YES NO	
9.4	When third-party contractors are engaged, is action taken by the Service to assess whether, and the extent to which, the engagement of third-party contractors poses risks of child abuse and harm	Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy Child Safe Environment Policy	YES NO	
9.4	Depending on the level of risk posed by third-party contractors, does the Service take actions to prevent or reduce risks of child abuse or harm. Appropriate actions may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - requiring third-party contractors to comply with the Service's policies and procedures - monitoring compliance by third-party contractors with the Child Safe Standards and/or the Service's policies and procedures - working with third-party contractors to identify, prevent and reduce risks of child abuse and harm - where a Service is unable to adequately manage risks of child abuse and harm posed by third-party contractors, consider terminating the contract or take other appropriate action to protect children 	Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy Child Safe Environment Policy	YES NO	



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9.2	If appropriate, are staff, volunteers, parents, carers and children are provided with information about online safety and risks in the online environment, such as online grooming, cyber bullying and sexting. Is support given to reporting negative experiences or concerns	Cyber Safety Policy and Procedure Behaviour Guidance – Bullying Policy	YES NO	
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STANDARD 10 - Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is regularly reviewed and improved

10.1 The organisation regularly reviews, evaluates and improves child safe practices

10.2 Complaints, concerns and safety incidents are analysed to identify causes and systemic failures to inform continuous improvement

10.3 The organisation reports on the findings of relevant reviews to staff and volunteers, community and families, and children and young people

CHILD SAFETY ACTIONS		POLICIES/ PROCEDURES/ RESOURCES	COMPLIANT	ACTION REQUIRED
10.1	Do all policies and procedures have a regular review period indicated in the document	Writing, Reviewing and Maintaining Policies Policy	YES NO	
10.3	Do reports document any child safety and wellbeing reviews and findings	Child Protection Policy Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy	YES NO	
10.1 10.2 10.3	Are records are kept of complaints, concerns, allegations and actions taken to respond	Record Keeping and Retention Policy	YES NO	
10.1 10.2	Are complaints, concerns, safety incidents or significant breaches of policy (such as the Code of Conduct) examined to understand what caused the problem and whether there are any flaws in the Service's policies, procedures and practices that contributed to the problem. Where flaws or failings are identified, are improvements are made to prevent the problem from happening again	Dealing with Complaints Policy	YES NO	



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<p>10.1 10.2 S.3 4.3</p>	<p>Does the Service regularly review policies, procedures and child safe practices, and make improvements considering;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - analysis of complaints, concerns, safety incidents and significant breaches of policy - feedback sought from staff, volunteers, children, families and communities - whether the Service has fully implemented each of the Child Safe Standards 	<p>Writing, Reviewing and Maintaining Policies Policy Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy</p>	<p>YES NO</p>	
<p>10.3</p>	<p>Are reports about the findings and actions taken in response to reviews of the Service's child safe practices are shared with staff, volunteers, children, families and communities</p>	<p>Team meeting notes</p>	<p>YES NO</p>	



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STANDARD 11 - Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people

- 11.1 Policies and procedures address all Child Safe Standards
- 11.2 Policies and procedures are documented and easy to understand
- 11.3 Best practice models and stakeholder consultation informs the development of policies and procedures
- 11.4 Leaders champion and model compliance with policies and procedures
- 11.5 Staff and volunteers understand and implement policies and procedures

CHILD SAFETY ACTIONS		POLICIES/ PROCEDURES/ RESOURCES	COMPLIANT	ACTION REQUIRED
11.1 11.2 2.3	Does a <i>Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy</i> set out the Service's expectations, practices and approach in relation to each of the Child Safe Standards	Child Safety and wellbeing Policy	YES NO	
11.1 11.2 2.4	Does the Code of Conduct set out the expectations for behaviour and responsibilities of staff and volunteers	Code of Conduct	YES NO	
11.1 11.2 9.1 9.3	Do risk assessment and management plans address risks of child abuse and harm	Risk Assessments	YES NO	
11.1 11.2 S.7	Does the complaint handling policy and processes address how the Service will respond and all internal and external reporting obligations	Dealing with Complaints Policy	YES NO	
11.1 11.2 S.6	Do Service recruitment, human resources and volunteering policies have a clear child safety focus	Recruitment Policy	YES NO	



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11.1 11.2 9.4	If the Service contracts facilities and/or services from third parties, do procurement policies ensure the safety of children	EC Intervention Practitioner Management Policy	YES NO	
11.3	Does the Service use input from consultations and available information about creating child safety and wellbeing to help develop, review and update policies and procedures related to child safety	Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy Child Safe Environment Policy	YES NO	
11.1	Do the Service's policies and procedures cover all the Child Safe Standards and address the risks to the safety of children that are specific to the Service and its environment	Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy	YES NO	
11.2	Are policies and procedures easy to understand and can they be accessed easily	Policy folder	YES NO	



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